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IN THE LAST DAYS OF 1943 THE FOURTEENTH ARMY IN BURMA BEGAN ITS SECOND OFFENSIVE IN THE ARAKAN AND THE JAPANESE WERE DRIVEN OUT OF THE TINY TOWN OF MAUNGDAW - AT THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER NAF...

Chapter 1. Patrol

BUT AS THE BRITISH ADVANCED, SEVEN THOUSAND JAPANESE SOLDIERS UNDER THE FANATICAL COLONEL TANAHASHI, WERE SLIPPING SECRETLY THROUGH THE JUNGLE ON THEIR FLANK.



THE JAPANESE SUDDENLY EMERGED FROM THE JUNGLE AND SEIZED TAUNG BAZAAR, SIX MILES IN THE REAR OF THE FORWARD UNITS, CUTTING THEM OFF FROM THEIR DIVISIONAL H.Q. AT MAUNGDAW...



IN THE SAME WAY THAT THEY HAD GAINED PREVIOUS SUCCESSES, THE JAPS HAD CUT OFF BRITISH UNITS FROM THEIR MAIN BODY. NOW THEY HOPED TO DECIMATE THE SURVIVORS AS THEY TRIED TO FIGHT THEIR WAY BACK. BUT THIS WAS NOT TO BE SO.

THIS TIME
THE JAPS ARE
GOING TO BE
DISAPPOINTED. OUR MEN
ARE STAYING AND THEY
WILL BE SUPPLIED BY
AIR. THEY
WILL FIGHT ON!



THE GENERAL COMMANDING THE DIVISION WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE JAPS' NEXT MOVE — AND THE POSITIONS OF HIS OTHER FORWARD UNITS.

IF THE ENEMY CROSSES THE MAYU RANGE — THEY WILL CUT OFF OUR OTHER DIVISION AS WELL!

THE MAYU RANGE IS SUPPOSED TO BE IMPASSABLE, SIR. BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED THE JAPS BEFORE. I'LL ARRANGE FOR AN OBSERVATION POST TO BE SET UP THERE.



AND SO IT WAS THAT CORPORAL TREGOWAN, PLYMOUTH BORN AND BRED AND ONLY NEWLY ARRIVED FROM ENGLAND, FOUND HIMSELF IN FRONT OF HIS BRIGADE COMMANDER...

I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE A MECHANIC, CORPORAL - AND THAT YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT BOATS ?

YES, SIR!

TREGOWAN COMPLETES THE PARTY THEN, SIR. I'LL TAKE HIM DOWN TO THE RIVER AND INTRODUCE HIM TO THE REST OF THE MEN.



TREGOWAN HAD EXPERIENCED LITTLE ACTION SO FAR, AND HE WAS GLAD TO THINK THAT HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN FOR THIS SPECIAL MISSION WHICH LIEUTENANT FARLEY EXPLAINED TO HIM ON THEIR WAY TO THE QUAYSIDE...

WE'LL BE MOVING OFF AT ANY TIME NOW, CORPORAL, SO AFTER YOU'VE MET THE REST OF THE MEN, GET YOUR KIT PACKED.

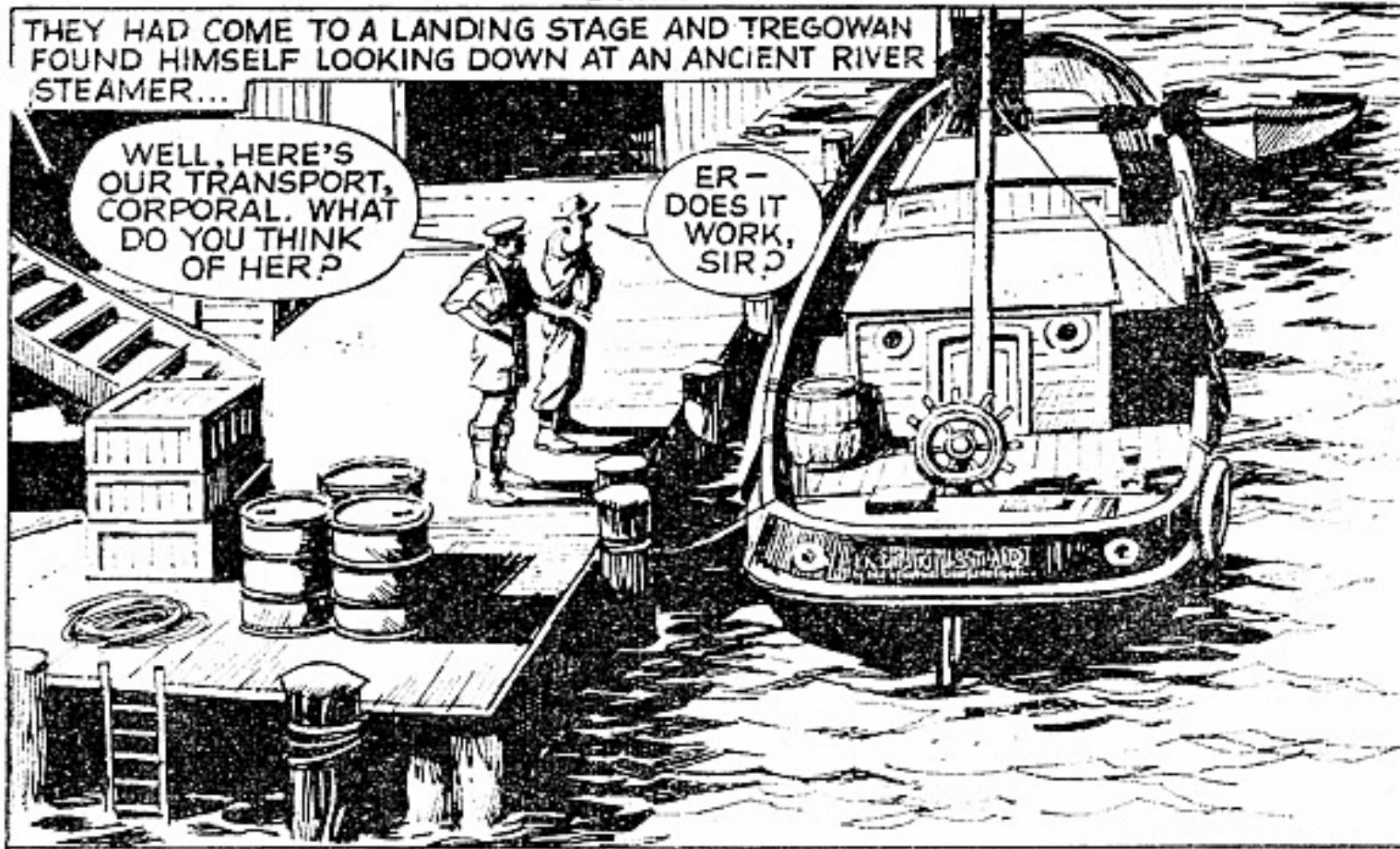
ER - YES, SIR.



THEY HAD COME TO A LANDING STAGE AND TREGOWAN FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING DOWN AT AN ANCIENT RIVER STEAMER...

WELL, HERE'S OUR TRANSPORT, CORPORAL. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HER?

ER - DOES IT WORK, SIR?



THE INDIAN STAR HAD BEEN FERRYING PASSENGERS ACROSS THE NAF RIVER FOR MANY YEARS. SHE WAS NO-ONE'S IDEA OF A SHIP OF WAR. BUT SHE WAS THE BEST THAT MAUNGDAW COULD OFFER.

OH, YES - SHE WORKS ALL RIGHT - THE JAPS HAVE BEEN USING HER. FORTUNATELY, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO SCUTTLE HER. SO NOW SHE'S YOUR PIGEON. WILL YOU BE ABLE TO COPE?

I THINK SO, SIR - AS LONG AS THE ENGINE'S SOUND!



AT THAT MOMENT, AN ARMY TRUCK PULLED ON TO THE QUAYSIDE AND A SERGEANT'S STRIDENT VOICE RANG OUT AS HALF-A-DOZEN MEN CLAMBERED TO THE GROUND.

AH, HERE
ARE THE REST
OF THE
CHAPS!

COME ON
THEN, HURRY
IT UP! GET THOSE
STORES ABOARD!

AS THE SOLDIERS SET TO WORK, SERGEANT VOSPER LEAPTED ABOARD THE *INDIAN STAR* AND FLUNG UP HIS ARM IN A RIGID SALUTE.

SIX MEN,
EQUIPMENT AND
STORES, ALL PRESENT
AND CORRECT,
SIR!

GOOD SHOW,
SERGEANT. THIS IS
CORPORAL TREGOWAN—
HE'S GOING TO TAKE
CARE OF THE BOAT
FOR US!

THINGS HAD BEEN MOVING FAST FOR CORPORAL TREGOWAN, BUT WITH VOSPER'S ARRIVAL THEY MOVED EVEN FASTER. AFTER AN INSPECTION OF THE BOAT AND ITS ENGINE, TREGOWAN WAS SENT TO COLLECT HIS KIT WHILE THE REST OF THE UNIT FOUND WOOD FOR FIRING THE SHIP'S BOILER...



AS TREGOWAN STOKED UP THE FURNACE AND WATCHED THE PRESSURE BUILD UP ON THE GAUGE, HE VENTURED TO QUESTION VOSPER. HE NEVER MADE THE MISTAKE AGAIN...

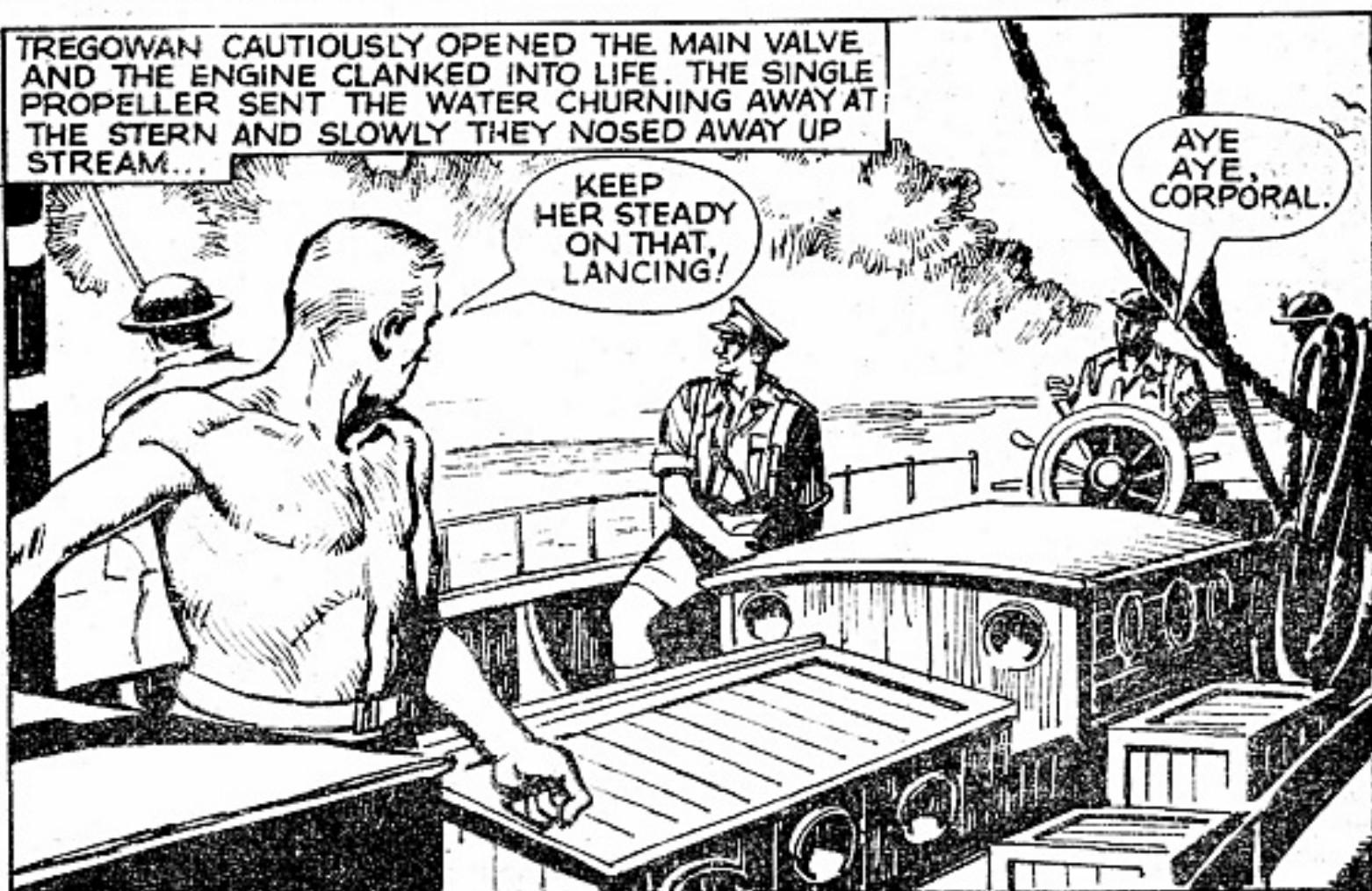


WHERE THE ARMY WANTS YOU TO KNOW SOMETHING, CORPORAL, YOU'LL BE TOLD. UNTIL THEN, JUST GET ON WITH YOUR JOB!

TREGOWAN WAS STILL SMARTING FROM VOSPER'S REBUKE WHEN LIEUTENANT FAR EY RETURNED. THE LIEUTENANT'S KIT WAS ALREADY ABOARD, AND, RATHER LIKE A SCHOOLBOY ON AN OUTING, HE TOLD TREGOWAN TO CAST OFF...



TREGOWAN CAUTIOUSLY OPENED THE MAIN VALVE AND THE ENGINE CLANKED INTO LIFE. THE SINGLE PROPELLER SENT THE WATER CHURNING AWAY AT THE STERN AND SLOWLY THEY NOSED AWAY UP STREAM...



PRESENTLY LIEUTENANT FARLEY EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF THEIR MISSION...

OUR TASK IS TO ESTABLISH A WIRELESS POST ON TOP OF THE MAYU RANGE AND KEEP OUR EYES OPEN FOR THE ENEMY. WE'RE GOING AS FAR AS WE CAN BY WATER - IT'S QUICKER AND SAFER!

I SUGGEST WE POST LOOKOUTS, SIR. THERE ARE STILL JAP STRAGGLERS IN THE AREA!

NONE OF THE SOLDIERS HAD HANDLED A BOAT BEFORE BUT TREGOWAN DISCOVERED THAT A PRIVATE CALLED LANCING WAS QUICK TO LEARN.

TRUST LANCING TO WANGLE HIMSELF A NICE EASY JOB! CAN'T YOU MANAGE THE BOAT YOURSELF, CORPORAL?

NO, SERGEANT. THAT ENGINE NEEDS CONSTANT ATTENTION. SOMEONE ELSE HAS TO STEER!

TREGOWAN HAD MET MANY N.C.O.'S WHO WERE DISLIKED BY THE MEN UNDER THEM, BUT THERE WAS MORE THAN DISLIKE IN THE WAY THE OTHER SOLDIERS LOOKED AT SERGEANT VOSPER...

I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO STAND AROUND TALKING! MARTIN! WEBSTER! KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT ON EACH SIDE OF THE BOAT. THE REST OF YOU, START CLEANING THOSE GUNS!

HE COULD HAVE STEERED THE BOAT HIMSELF!

NO - HE WOULDN'T TAKE THE RISK OF MAKING A FOOL OF HIMSELF!

THEY HAD COVERED SOME FIFTEEN MILES AND DUSK WAS JUST BEGINNING TO FALL WHEN FARLEY TOLD TREGOWAN TO TURN OFF THE MAIN STREAM OF THE RIVER INTO ONE OF THE TRIBUTARIES THAT FLOWED IN FROM THE EAST...

AS LONG AS I'VE GOT MY MAP READING CORRECT THIS WILL TAKE US NEAR WHERE WE WANT TO GO!

VERY GOOD, SIR!



THEY ANCHORED IN MID-STREAM FOR THE NIGHT AND IN THE MORNING CHUGGED SLOWLY UP THE RIVER. THE SCENE WAS CALM AND PEACEFUL — UNTIL A RIFLE SHOT CRACKED THROUGH THE SILENCE...

AAAGH!

DOWN!
GET
DOWN!



VOSPER SENT A FUSILLADE OF BULLETS WHISTLING TOWARDS THE BANK EVEN AS HE SHOUTED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE OTHERS...

FIRE AT THE TREES!
LANCING, STEER INTO THE BANK!

HE'S... DEAD...



THE PROW OF THE BOAT NOSED GENTLY INTO THE SAND AND VOSPER RAPPED OUT HIS ORDERS.

CORPORAL TREGOWAN, SECURE THE BOAT. MARTIN, STAY HERE ON THE BANK. THE REST OF YOU, COME WITH ME!



Bunker Hill

THE MEN SPREAD OUT AND ADVANCED THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH. SUDDENLY VOSPER HALTED, MOTIONED TO THE MAN NEXT TO HIM FOR HIS RIFLE. HE AIMED AND FIRED...



WHEN THEY GOT BACK TO THE BOAT VOSPER ORDERED A COUPLE OF MEN TO DIG A GRAVE FOR LIEUTENANT FARLEY. THERE WAS ONLY CONTEMPT IN HIS VOICE WHEN HE SPOKE OF HIS DEAD OFFICER...



AFTER THE BURIAL, THE INDIAN STAR PUSHED ITS NOSE OUT INTO THE CURRENT ONCE MORE. THEY STEAMED STEADILY UPSTREAM.

YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH OUT FOR THESE NIPS. ONE MOMENT YOU SEE 'EM, NEXT MOMENT THEY'VE DISAPPEARED. SO YOU'VE GOT TO SHOOT QUICK - AND DON'T MISS!

IF WE'RE LUCKY, IT'LL BE VOSPER'S TURN NEXT TIME!



VOSPER HEARD LANCING'S MUTTERED COMMENT AND SWUNG ON HIM BELLIGERENTLY.

WHAT'S THAT PRIVATE LANCING? I DON'T WANT ANY OF YOUR LIP - UNDERSTAND?

YES, SERGEANT,
I UNDERSTAND.



Chapter 2. Mutiny

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON THEY CAME AS NEAR TO THE MAYU RANGE AS THE RIVER WOULD TAKE THEM AND VOSPER ORDERED TREGOWAN TO MOOR THE BOAT...



TAKING SOME OF THE STORES THEY MOVED OFF THROUGH THE JUNGLE...



IN THE EARLY MORNING TREGOWAN FOUND HIMSELF ON GUARD WITH PRIVATE LANCING...

IF YOU HAD A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, LANCING, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN AN OFFICER.

THEY OFFERED ME A COMMISSION AND I TURNED IT DOWN. MY ONLY AMBITION IS TO GET OUT OF IT!



TREGOWAN FOUND IT BAFFLING THAT SOMEONE AS INTELLIGENT AS LANCING COULD SO DESPISE THE ARMY...

I KNOW IT'S A BIT ROUGH IN THE ARMY AT TIMES — BUT A MAN'S GOT TO MAKE THE BEST OF THINGS — AND OF HIMSELF!



THE PARTY WAS ON THE MOVE AGAIN EARLY. PRESENTLY THEY CAME OUT INTO THE OPEN AND THERE, REARING UP IN FRONT OF THEM, WAS THE PRECIPITOUS MAYU RANGE.

HECK!
HAVE WE
GOT TO CLIMB
THAT?

THAT'S RIGHT,
SOLDIER, AND
WE'RE GOING
TO!



WHEN THEY GOT TO THE RIDGE IT SEEMED TO RISE VERTICALLY IN FRONT OF THEM. BUT, CLINGING TO ITS SURFACE LIKE ANTS, THEY CLAWED THEIR WAY UPWARDS.



THEY STUMBLED ON A WATERCOURSE AND FOLLOWED IT FOR A WHILE, BUT THE MUD MADE THE GOING ENERGY-SAPPING. THEY HAD TO PICK ANOTHER ROUTE.



THE SERGEANT SEEMED MADE OF WHIPCORD AND STEEL. HE WAS IN FRONT, PULLING THEM UP — ALONGSIDE, GOADING THEM ON — BEHIND, CURSING AND PUSHING. AND ALL THE TIME DRIVING THEM TOWARDS THE SUMMIT.



THEY CAMPED FOR THE NIGHT WITHIN SIGHT OF THE TOP AND IN THE MORNING, THEY WERE MOVING AGAIN EARLY TOWARDS A SADDLEBACK RIDGE THAT VOSPER HAD SPOTTED.



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VOSPER CAME OUT ON THE CREST AND CAREFULLY SCANNED THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MAYU RANGE. HE COULD SEE NO SIGN OF MOVEMENT...

YOU NEVER DO SEE ANYTHING - NOT WITH JAPS! BUT IF THEY'RE THERE, THEY'LL COME THIS WAY!



AS THE MEN BROUGHT UP THE EQUIPMENT, VOSPER AND TREGOWAN SURVEYED THE SITE THE SERGEANT HAD CHOSEN FOR THE OBSERVATION POST...

BUT - BUT THAT ALMOST LOOKS LIKE A PATH DOWN THERE - A NATIVE TRACK OVER THE RIDGE!

THAT'S RIGHT, CORPORAL. WHAT A PITY WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO LOOK FOR IT.



VOSPER GAVE A SARDONIC SMILE AND TREGOWAN REALISED THAT EVEN IF THE SERGEANT HAD KNOWN THERE WAS AN EASIER WAY UP THE RIDGE HE WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN IT.

ALL RIGHT - I'M GOING TO POST ONE MAN AS LOOKOUT AND THE REST OF YOU ARE GOING TO CONSTRUCT A BUNKER!

HE LIKES THINGS THAT GET IN HIS WAY - HE ENJOYS SHOULDERING HIS WAY PAST THEM.



UNDER VOSPER'S DIRECTION, THE MEN STARTED DIGGING ON THE STONY,
SCRUB-COVERED SLOPE THAT OVERLOOKED THE NATIVE TRACK...

WE NEED TO BE
WELL HIDDEN - BUT
WHAT'S HE DIGGING
IN LIKE THIS FOR?

GET YOUR
AERIAL RIGGED,
MARTIN - WE MUST
CONTACT DIVISIONAL
H.Q.



VOSPER THEN WENT BACK TO THE PARTY WORKING ON THE BUNKER...

BANK EARTH
UP IN FRONT OF
THOSE LOGS AND
THEN PLANT SOME
BUSHES THERE. I
WANT THIS PLACE TO
BE INVISIBLE FROM
TEN YARDS!



Bunker Hill

JUST BEFORE DAYLIGHT STARTED TO FADE, SERGEANT VOSPER TOOK CORPORAL TREGOWAN DOWN TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PASS AND THEY INSPECTED THEIR HANDIWORK...



AS DARKNESS CAME THEY CROWDED INTO THE EARTH-WALLED BUNKER. THEY WERE CRAMPED TOGETHER WITHOUT ROOM TO MOVE. BUT FATIGUE OVERCAME THEM AND THEY SLEPT...



TREGOWAN AND LANCING WERE ON GUARD TOGETHER. THEY STOOD APART, LOOKING DOWN AT DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE SLOPE...

TWO ARMIES OF MEN, MILES FROM THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, FIGHTING OVER A PIECE OF JUNGLE THAT NOBODY WANTS ANYWAY. NOT SURPRISING THAT LANCING JUST WANTS TO GET OUT...



IT WAS LANCING WHO HEARD THE FIRST FAINT NOISE...



GRADUALLY THE NOISES GREW LOUDER AND MORE DISTINCT. THE CHINK OF STEEL, THE CREAKING OF ROPES, THE RUSTLE AND SNAP OF BRANCHES BEING PUSHED ASIDE. TREGOWAN SENT LANCING TO ROUSE THE OTHERS.



DAWN WAS STREAKING THE SKY AS THE JAPANESE CAME ACROSS THE PASS.
PEERING DOWN FROM ABOVE TREGOWAN COULD PICK OUT AN ARAKANESE NATIVE
AT THEIR HEAD...

THEY'VE GOT
A NATIVE GUIDE
TO SHOW THEM
THE WAY.



NO WONDER
THEY'RE SO MOBILE—
NO HEAVY BAGGAGE,
NOTHING BIGGER THAN
A MORTAR OR MACHINE GUN.

BUT AT LENGTH THEY
WERE GONE AND
TREGOWAN AND
LANCING RETURNED
TO THE DUG-OUT...

A BATTALION, I RECKON.
MARTIN, I WANT TO GET A
MESSAGE OFF TO DIVISION
IMMEDIATELY!

NOW THAT OUR PEOPLE
KNOW THEY'RE COMING
THEY'LL GET A WARM
WELCOME!



MARTIN WAS SOON TAPPING OUT THE VITAL NEWS TO DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS. BUT VOSPER'S NEXT ORDER CAME AS A SURPRISE.

NOW, CORPORAL—
WE CAN SET ABOUT
EXTENDING THIS DUG-OUT.
WE'VE GOT TO PROTECT
OUR REAR!

EXTEND IT?
ARE WE STAYING
HERE THEN? WE'VE
DONE OUR JOB—SPOTTED
THE JAPS AND WARNED
DIV!

VOSPER ANSWERED HIM WITH A TRIUMPHANT SNEER...

AND WHAT HAPPENS
NEXT? NOW WE'VE
WARNED THEM, DIV.
H.Q. WILL COME UP THE
COAST FROM THE SOUTH
AND THE SECOND
BRIGADE WILL COME
DOWN FROM THE NORTH
AND THE JAPS WILL BE
TRAPPED!

LANCING'S QUICK BRAIN HAD ALREADY GRASPED WHAT THE SERGEANT WAS DRIVING AT...

THE JAPS WILL HAVE ONLY ONE WAY OUT - BACK OVER THIS RIDGE - AND SERGEANT VOSPER AND SEVEN MEN WILL BE COVERING THE PASS...

RIGHT, LANCING.
YOU'RE NOT AS STUPID AS YOU LOOK!

SUDDENLY THE IMPLICATIONS OF VOSPER'S PLAN WERE FRIGHTENINGLY CLEAR.

BUT THERE ARE ONLY EIGHT OF US - AND THERE'S NEARLY A THOUSAND JAPS!
WE WON'T LAST FIVE MINUTES. WE CAN'T STOP THEM!

YOU SAID YOU COULDN'T CLIMB THE MAYU RANGE, MARTIN. BUT I MADE YOU! AND I'LL MAKE YOU DO THIS. NOW GET DIGGING!

SOME OF THEM DUG IN FROM THE FAR SIDE OF THE HILLTOP WHILE OTHERS TUNNELLLED THROUGH FROM THE BACK OF THE DUG-OUT...

YOU REMEMBER THE TORTOISE - THAT HILL THE JAPS HELD JUST OUTSIDE MAUNGDAW? IT TOOK US DAYS TO CRACK IT. THAT'S WHERE VOSPER GOT THE IDEA FOR THIS!

BUT THEY HAD DOZENS OF BUNKERS THERE - ALL SUPPORTING EACH OTHER - WE'VE ONLY GOT ONE!



DOWN IN THE PASS VOSPER WAS SETTING BOOBY TRAPS...

A FEW LEAVES ON TOP OF THIS AND IT'S ALL READY FOR THE NIPS...



BUT HIS MEN'S DISCONTENT WAS SMOULDERING ANGRILY...

NO HOPE OF THE JAPS JUST WALKING PAST LIKE THEY DID BEFORE. NOT WITH ALL THOSE BOOBY TRAPS VOSPER'S LAYING. THEY'LL TURN ON US - AND WHAT CHANCE WILL WE HAVE?

VOSPER WILL HAVE HIS CHANCE OF GLORY. THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOME MORE KILLING. THE ONLY THING HE KNOWS ABOUT!



Bunker Hill

IN THE AFTERNOON, THE SOUNDS OF DISTANT GUNFIRE ROLLED UP FROM THE COAST. IT WAS TO THE NORTH OF THEM BUT NOT FAR AWAY...

THERE - LOOKS LIKE MORTARS - THERE WAS SOME STUFF BEFORE SEEMED TO BE HEAVIER.

THE JAPS HAVE RUN INTO THE SECOND BRIGADE. THEY SHOULD BE BACK SOON.

MARTIN RELIEVED TREGOWAN AS LOOKOUT AND THE CORPORAL WENT BACK TO THE DUG-OUT WITH VOSPER...

I'M GOING TO FETCH THE REST OF THE STORES NOW, CORPORAL. SEE THAT THIS IS PROPERLY CAMOUFLAGED.

STORES? FROM THE BOAT, SARGE?

AS VOSPER MOVED AWAY, HE GAVE THE TOILING SOLDIERS ONE LAST WORD OF WARNING...

AND I WOULDN'T MOVE AWAY FROM THERE, IF I WERE YOU - THERE ARE BOOBY-TRAPS EVERYWHERE!



VOSPER HAD MARKED OUT PATHS FOR THE LOOKOUTS BUT OUTSIDE THOSE, ONLY HE KNEW WHERE IT WAS SAFE TO VENTURE...



Bunker Hill

TREGOWAN KNEW THAT THEIR COMPLAINTS WERE JUSTIFIED. BUT THE CORPORAL WAS A GOOD SOLDIER AND TRIED TO DEFEND THE SERGEANT...

HE'S DOING
WHAT HE THINKS
IS BEST.

IT'S NOT THE BEST
FOR US! HE'S GOING
TO GET US ALL
KILLED!

HE HAD NO
ORDERS TO DO THIS.
WHY DOESN'T HE CONTACT
DIV? WHY CAN'T WE CALL
DIV. NOW - WE CAN ASK
THEM FOR ORDERS!

TREGOWAN WRESTLED WITH THE PROBLEM FOR A MOMENT AND THEN GAVE WAY...

ALL RIGHT -
WE'LL MAKE A
REPORT TO DIV.
H.Q.!

BUT WHEN MARTIN, THE SIGNALLER, TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT, A PUZZLED FROWN TOLD THE OTHERS THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG...

IT'S DEAD -
IT'S ABSOLUTELY
DEAD!

BUT IT WAS
ALL RIGHT THIS
MORNING!

IT DID NOT TAKE LONG TO LOCATE THE SOURCE OF THE TROUBLE - AND TO REALISE THAT THERE WAS NO REMEDY...

TWO OF THE VALVES
HAVE GONE - THEY'VE
BEEN TAKEN OUT!

SERGEANT VOSPER!
HE'S MADE SURE WE'LL
GET NO ORDERS BUT
HIS!

THE LIGHT WAS FADING AS THE SERGEANT CAME BACK, STRIDING ARROGANTLY THROUGH THE SCRUB, SEEMINGLY OBLIVIOUS OF THE WEIGHT HE CARRIED...

A RECEPTION PARTY? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SO FOND OF ME.

SERGEANT VOSPER. I WANT YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH DIVISION AND CONFIRM OUR ORDERS.



VOSPER WALKED STRAIGHT THROUGH THEM, IGNORING THEM UNTIL HE HAD DUMPED THE AMMUNITION BOX AND STARTED TO TAKE OFF HIS WEBBING...

AND SINCE WHEN DO YOU TELL ME WHAT TO DO, CORPORAL?

IT'S A REASONABLE REQUEST. YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND UNLESS YOU GET CONFIRMATION FROM DIVISION I'M GOING TO LEAD THESE MEN OUT OF HERE!



VOSPER DROPPED HIS HAVERSACK TO THE GROUND AND ABRUPTLY UNSLUNG HIS STEN...

MUTINY IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY, EH, CORPORAL TREGOWAN? I THINK I'D BE JUSTIFIED IN SHOOTING YOU!

YOU SEE, CORPORAL - THE SERGEANT DOESN'T JIB AT A LITTLE THING LIKE MURDER.



THE COOL VOICE OF LANCING BROKE THE SERGEANT'S CONTROL OF THE SITUATION. VOSPER'S EYES FLICKERED OVER THE FACES OF THE OTHER MEN, TRYING TO GAUGE THEIR INTENTIONS...

ARE YOU PREPARED TO KILL ALL OF US, SARGE? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO. WE'RE ON TREGOWAN'S SIDE!



Bunker Hill

FOR SECONDS THERE WAS SILENCE — THEN CAME THE HARSH CRACK OF AN EXPLODING GRENADE AND THE THUD OF RUNNING FEET...



DARKNESS WAS FALLING WITH TROPICAL SWIFTNESS AS WEBSTER GABBLED OUT HIS STORY.

THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR OF THEM! ONE MUST HAVE KICKED A BOOBY-TRAP. THE OTHERS DIVED FOR COVER AND I RAN!

I'D BETTER FETCH THE OTHER LOOKOUT.

HUDDLED TOGETHER IN THE BUNKER, THE REVOLT BOILED UP AGAIN...

THERE'S A WHOLE JAP BATTALION OUT THERE. AT DAWN THEY'LL ATTACK AND WE WON'T STAND A CHANCE. IF WE GO NOW WE CAN SLIP AWAY IN THE DARK.

LOOK OUT,
VOSPER'S COMING BACK!

AS VOSPER ENTERED HE FOUND HIMSELF COVERED BY HOSTILE GUNS...

HERE ARE
SOME GRENADES—
HECK — WHAT'S
THIS?

WE'RE GETTING
OUT OF HERE, AND
IF YOU VALUE YOUR
LIFE, VOSPER — DON'T
TRY TO STOP US!

QUICK AS A FLASH THE SERGEANT HURLED THE BOX AT LANCING, BUT NOW HE REAPED SOME OF THE HATE HE HAD SOWN. A BOOT TRIPPED HIM AND LANCING'S STEN SLAMMED AGAINST HIS HEAD.

NO,
YOU
DON'T!

YOU
MUTINOUS
SCUM - AAAH!

AS VOSPER LAY UNCONSCIOUS, THE OTHERS FORMED A HASTY PLAN OF ACTION. SINCE THE BOOBY-TRAP HAD EXPLODED THERE HAD BEEN SILENCE OUTSIDE — THE JAPS WERE OBVIOUSLY UNWILLING TO RISK MORE MOVEMENT IN THE DARK...



ONE BY ONE THEY WRIGGLED OUT OF THE BUNKER. CORPORAL TREGOWAN WAS COMING BACK WITH THE OTHER LOOKOUT WHEN HE MET THEM ON THE EDGE OF THE JUNGLE...



THEY MADE FAST TIME DOWN THE RIDGE AND HAD REACHED THE NARROW STRIP OF COASTAL PLAIN BEFORE TREGOWAN NOTICED THAT LANCING KEPT HIM IN FRONT. AS THE MOON ROSE, HE TURNED TO LOOK BACK - AND DISCOVERED WHY...



THE OTHER MEN BRUSHED PAST THEM, RELUCTANT TO FACE TREGOWAN. BUT LANCING HAD THE COURAGE OF HIS BELIEFS...



TREGOWAN STRUGGLED WITH THE PROBLEM. HIS SYMPATHIES WERE WITH THE MEN - BUT HIS ARMY TRAINING TOLD HIM THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION ABOUT WHAT THEY HAD DONE - IT WAS WRONG!



THE SOUND OF RUNNING FEET INTERRUPTED THEM—
AND MARTIN BURST FROM THE TREES...

THE BOAT!
IT'S GONE!



THEY HURRIED TO THE BANK. THE OTHERS WERE CASTING UP AND DOWN STREAM,
BUT THE CUT BRANCHES WHERE THEY HAD CHOPPED THE CAMOUFLAGE SHOWED
TREGOWAN EXACTLY WHERE THE BOAT HAD BEEN.



WE MIGHT HAVE KNOWN VOSPER WOULD BE TOO CLEVER FOR US. HE'LL BE ON THE WAY DOWN NOW, LOOKING FOR US. HE WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO IF HE HADN'T GOT US TO KICK AROUND.



BUT EVEN AS MARTIN SPOKE, FROM THE RIDGE CAME THE CRACK OF GRENADES AND THEN THE UNMISTAKABLE CLATTER OF A BREN GUN.

IT WAS INCREDIBLE BUT THEY KNEW IT WAS TRUE. VOSPER WAS TRYING TO STOP THE JAPS ON HIS OWN.

THE JAPS HAVE TRIED TO MAKE A MOVE BY MOONLIGHT - BUT THEY'VE RUN INTO THE BOOBY TRAPS AGAIN - AND NOW VOSPER'S HAVING A GO WITH THE BREN.

AS A MAN I DON'T LIKE HIM ANY MORE THAN YOU DO. BUT AS A SOLDIER HE'S DOING THE RIGHT THING - HE'S FIGHTING THE ENEMY. I'M GOING BACK TO HELP HIM!



A FEELING OF GUILT WAS SPREADING THROUGH THE MEN. THEY HAD RUN AWAY - AND THEY KNEW IT.

BUT WE
CAN'T GET BACK
IN TIME!

WE MIGHT.
THE JAPS WON'T LIKE
THOSE BOOBY-TRAPS IN
THE DARK - AND THEY DON'T
KNOW THEY'RE ONLY UP
AGAINST ONE MAN! IF WE
GET BACK BEFORE DAWN
WE'VE GOT A CHANCE. I'M
GOING, ANYWAY.

THE OTHERS STARTED TO FOLLOW HIM.
THEY WERE SOLDIERS AND THERE
SEEMED NOTHING ELSE THEY
COULD DO...

THIS DARNED
MOUNTAIN - ALL WE
SEEM TO DO IS CLIMB
UP AND DOWN IT!

WHEN THEY WERE IN SIGHT OF THE BUNKER, THEY WHISTLED TO LET VOSPER KNOW WHO THEY WERE. THEN, IN THE STILL ENVELOPING DARKNESS, THEY SLIPPED BACK INSIDE.

SO YOU CAME BACK, DID YOU? WHEN YOU FOUND THAT YOU COULDN'T GET AWAY. ALL RIGHT, BUT WHEN WE GET OUT OF HERE EVERY ONE OF YOU WILL FACE A COURT-MARTIAL!

THANKS FOR THE WELCOME, SERGEANT.



VOSPER HAD SPENT THE NIGHT ALONE, SURROUNDED BY A VICIOUS ENEMY, FACING ALMOST CERTAIN DEATH — AND HE HAD ALTERED NOT AT ALL.

DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID? WE SLOG OUR WAY BACK HERE TO HELP HIM — AND HE'S GOING TO COURT-MARTIAL US! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO WITH THAT SWINE— SHOOT HIM!

RIGHT NOW WE NEED EVERY MAN HERE — AND WE NEED VOSPER MORE THAN ANYBODY!



Chapter 3. *The Sacrifice*

THE JAPS HAD ONLY MOVED ONCE IN THE NIGHT - AND VOSPER HAD STOPPED THEM. BUT NOW THE DAWN WAS FINGERING THE SKY AND THEY WOULD ATTACK IN STRENGTH. VOSPER DEPLOYED HIS FORCES - THREE AT THE REAR AND FIVE IN FRONT.



A CRACK SOUNDED FROM THE PASS AND FLAME AND SMOKE SPEWED INTO THE AIR. THERE CAME A SECOND EXPLOSION AND VOSPER GRINNED EVILLY.

ANOTHER TWO DEAD! THEY'LL BE CRAWLING THROUGH THE SCRUB NOW AND THEY'RE BOUND TO HIT MORE GRENADES.

LOOK AT HIM - HE'S HAPPY - HE'S ACTUALLY ENJOYING THIS!



A WHOLE SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS SHOOK THE RIDGE AND THEN SUDDENLY THEY SAW THE JAPANESE...



THE HARSH CLATTER OF THE TWO BRENS REVERBERATED DEAFENINGLY INSIDE THE EARTH-WALLED BUNKER AS THEY SENT A STREAM OF LEAD SCYTHING THROUGH THE SCRUB...



THEN THERE WAS SILENCE AS THE JAPANESE DREW BACK, LEAVING THEIR DEAD AND DYING ON THE BATTLEFIELD...

THEY KNOW WHERE WE ARE NOW - SO TAKE THAT BREM THROUGH TO THE BACK, CORPORAL, AND SEND TWO MEN IN HERE WITH STEN GUNS.

RIGHT, SERGEANT.



THEY WATCHED AND WAITED. THEN THE SILENCE WAS BROKEN AGAIN. THE EARTH IN FRONT OF THE BUNKER SUDDENLY EXPLODED UPWARDS AND THERE CAME THE SHARP, OMINOUS CRUMP OF A MORTAR BOMB...



THERE SEEMED TO BE TWO MORTARS OPERATING. STEADILY, RELENTLESSLY, THEY LAID A PATTERN OF BOMBS ON AND AROUND THE BUNKER. SOMETIMES SHOWERS OF EARTH AND STONES FELL ON THE MEN CROUCHING INSIDE - BUT THE ROOF HELD.

THEY'RE TRYING TO SOFTEN US UP - AND THEN THEY'LL CHARGE - AND THAT WILL BE THE FINISH OF US!

TRAPPED IN THIS HOLE - JUST WAITING TO BE KILLED! DARN VOSPER!



BUT THE BUNKER HELD — AND THE MEN INSIDE IT WERE ALIVE AND READY WHEN THE BOMBS CONTAINED SMOKE INSTEAD OF EXPLOSIVE...

SMOKE!
MAN YOUR GUNS. THEY'LL BE COMING IN NOW!



OUT OF THE UNDERGROWTH ALL ROUND THE BUNKER ROSE JAPANESE SOLDIERS. THEY SCREAMED AS THEY FLUNG THEMSELVES AT THE HANDFUL OF BRITISH INFANTRYMEN...



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ONCE MORE THE BRENS HAMMERED OUT THEIR MESSAGE OF DEATH AND THE RATTLE OF THE STENS SWELLED THE HIDEOUS CLAMOUR. OUT THROUGH THE FIRING SLITS POURED A STREAM OF GRENADES, YET STILL FRESH JAPS APPEARED AND CAME ON...

HOW MANY
MORE OF THEM?
HOW MANY
MORE?

COME AND
GET IT, YOU LITTLE
RATS! COME AND
GET IT!



AT LAST, UNDER THE WITHERING FIRE FROM THE BUNKER, THE JAP ADVANCE FALTERED, THEN GROUND TO A HALT.

WE'RE HOLDING
THEM! THEY'RE
BREAKING!



THE JAPANESE HAD TAKEN HEAVY PUNISHMENT. THEY BROKE THEN, SCATTERING DOWN THE SLOPE. THE SMOKE DRIFTED AWAY AND THE ONLY SOUND CAME FROM THE DYING...

WE STOPPED 'EM THAT TIME, ALL RIGHT!

YES, BUT FOR HOW LONG? WE HAVEN'T GOT TOO MUCH AMMUNITION LEFT—AND WHEN THAT'S GONE...



VOSPER TURNED HARSHLY ON LANCING. BUT BEFORE HE COULD SPEAK A NEW SOUND SPLIT THE SILENCE.

SARGE! THE NIPS HAVE GOT A MACHINE GUN ACROSS THE VALLEY!



VOSPER SNATCHED THE BINOCULARS FROM THE SOLDIER'S HANDS, REALISING TOO WELL THE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE ENEMY'S LATEST MOVE. THE MACHINE GUN COULD FIRE RIGHT DOWN INTO THE BUNKER...

THE DEVILS! IF THEY KEEP THAT THING GOING DURING THE NEXT ATTACK...

WELL, SARGE. YOU GOT US INTO THIS MESS. WHAT DO YOU RECKON ON DOING ABOUT IT?



VOSPER KNEW THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING HE COULD DO— AND HE DID NOT FLINCH FROM IT...

I'M GOING AFTER THAT M.G., LANCING. GIVE ME ALL THE FIRE YOU CAN!



AT THE REAR OF THE BUNKER THE JUNGLE WAS THICKER AND CLOSER. VOSPER ORDERED TREGWAN TO FOLLOW HIM AND DASHED TOWARDS IT.

RIGHT!
COVER
US!



ONLY TWO ENEMY SHOTS CRACKED OUT AS TREGOWAN DARTED ACROSS THE OPEN SPACE, AND HE HEARD THE BULLETS BUZZ ANGRILY PAST. THEN THE HAMMERING OF THE BRENS AND THE STENS BEHIND HIM DROWNED ALL OTHER NOISE.

IF WE CIRCLE ROUND WE'LL MISS THE BOOBY TRAPS AND MOST OF THE JAPS. BUT IF WE TAKE TOO LONG IT'LL BE TOO LATE!

YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO HIM. HE'S AS COOL AS THEY COME.

STEALTHILY AND SWIFTLY THEY SLIPPED THROUGH THE TALL GRASS...

YOU COULD BE WITHIN FIVE FEET OF A MAN IN THIS AND HE WOULDN'T KNOW IT.

VOSPER HAD SUDDENLY STOPPED, STARING AT A PATCH OF GRASS WHICH MOVED SLIGHTLY. THEN HE LEAPT, HIS STEN CRASHING TO THE HEAD OF THE JAPANESE SOLDIER WHO CROUCHED THERE...



THEY MOVED ON UP THE SLOPE TOWARDS THE ENEMY GUN POSITION. THEN SUDDENLY...

THEY'VE STARTED THE ATTACK! COME ON, CORPORAL — WE'VE GOT TO SILENCE THAT MACHINE GUN — AND QUICK!



GUIDED BY THAT NEVER-ENDING CLAMOUR ABOVE THEIR HEADS THEY SCRAMBLED UPWARDS UNTIL THEY WERE IN SIGHT OF THE GUN-PIT...

WE HAVEN'T GOT MUCH TIME, CORPORAL. COME ON!



BEFORE TREGOWAN COULD MOVE, SERGEANT VOSPER WAS RACING ACROSS THE GAP, A HAIL OF LEAD RIPPING FROM HIS STEN...



IT WAS ALL OVER IN A FEW SECONDS. THE THREE JAP GUNNERS LAY DEAD BESIDE THEIR GUN. SERGEANT VOSPER'S STEN HAD REAPED A GRIM HARVEST.



Bunker Hill

THE CHATTER OF THE JAP MACHINE GUN BEGAN AGAIN. BUT THERE WERE
BRITISH HANDS AIMING IT, BRITISH HANDS PRESSING THE TRIGGER...



THE ATTACKING JAPS FALTERED IN ALARM AS THE HAIL
OF LEAD CAUGHT THEM IN ENFILED. BUT SOME OF THEM
WERE VERY CLOSE TO THE BUNKER NOW...



WITH AN EYE-SEARING FLASH THE GRENADE EXPLODED RIGHT IN THE GUN SLIT. FOR MARTIN, IT WAS THE END OF THE BATTLE.



THE REAR RANK OF JAPS TURNED THEN AND A VICIOUS TORNADO OF FIRE SWEPT THE OPPOSITE SLOPE, GROPING TOWARDS THE CAPTURED MACHINE GUN NEST...



Bunker Hill

HIT BY SEVERAL BULLETS, THE SERGEANT TOPPLED AWAY FROM THE GUN.



THEN TREGOWAN FLUNG HIMSELF BEHIND THE GUN AND HE LEVELLED IT AT THE DISTANT FIGURES OF THE ENEMY. HIS FINGER CLAMPED ON THE TRIGGER...



THAT ADDED BURST OF FIRE BROKE THE JAP DISCIPLINE. THEY FLED DOWN THE SLOPE IN DISORDER, BULLETS DROPPING MANY OF THEM AS THEY RAN. SOON, ONLY THE SOUND OF THEIR HURRIED FLIGHT THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH COULD BE HEARD.



SERGEANT VOSPER WAS WEAKER NOW. TREGOWAN KNEW THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO...

WE HAD TO HOLD THEM, CORPORAL -
WE HAD TO! MAYBE I WAS WRONG TO
THROW AWAY OTHER MEN'S LIVES. I HATED
THE JAPS - TREGOWAN. MAYBE I HATED TOO
MUCH - DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO
YOU!



Bunker Hill

CORPORAL TREGOWAN LOOKED DOWN AT THE STILL FORM. THERE WAS NO LIFE IN VOSPER NOW—NOR HATRED...

YOU WERE A GOOD SOLDIER, SERGEANT. UNDERNEATH THE HATRED, YOU WERE BETTER THAN ALL OF US PUT TOGETHER.



HE LEFT SERGEANT VOSPER WHERE HE HAD FALLEN AND SLOWLY MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE BUNKER.

VOSPER'S DEAD, LANCING. HE GAVE HIS LIFE GETTING THAT MACHINE GUN.



SUDDENLY A WARNING SHOUT FROM LANCING SPUN TREGOWAN ROUND — AND HE FELT HIMSELF BEING THROWN TO ONE SIDE...



THE CORPORAL'S STEN HAMMERED IN HIS HANDS. THE LAST JAP CRUMPLED TO THE GROUND.



LANCING WAS DEAD. CORPORAL TREGOWAN LOOKED DOWN AT HIM SADLY YET WONDERINGLY.



THE CORPORAL LOOKED UP AS THE TWO SURVIVORS OF THAT TRAGIC PARTY CAME TOWARDS HIM...

THE SARGE IS DEAD, BLOKES. HE THREW HIS LIFE AWAY FOR US. BUT WE HELD THE JAPS AND BROKE THEM. MAYBE HE WAS WRONG TO STAY AND FIGHT - BUT HE DID - AND WE'RE STILL ALIVE. GET YOUR GUNS, WE'D BETTER BE PULLING OUT OF HERE.



YEAH,
RIGHTO,
CORP...

THEY BURIED THEIR COMRADES
ON THE LONELY SLOPES OF
BUNKER HILL AND THEN SLOWLY
MADE THEIR WAY DOWN THE
RIDGE. CORPORAL TREGOWAN
LED THEM ...



Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers Ltd., Manchester 1, and published each month by Fleetway Publications Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Soda Agents: Australasia, Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd. South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. Kingtons Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of, by way of Trade, except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of, in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

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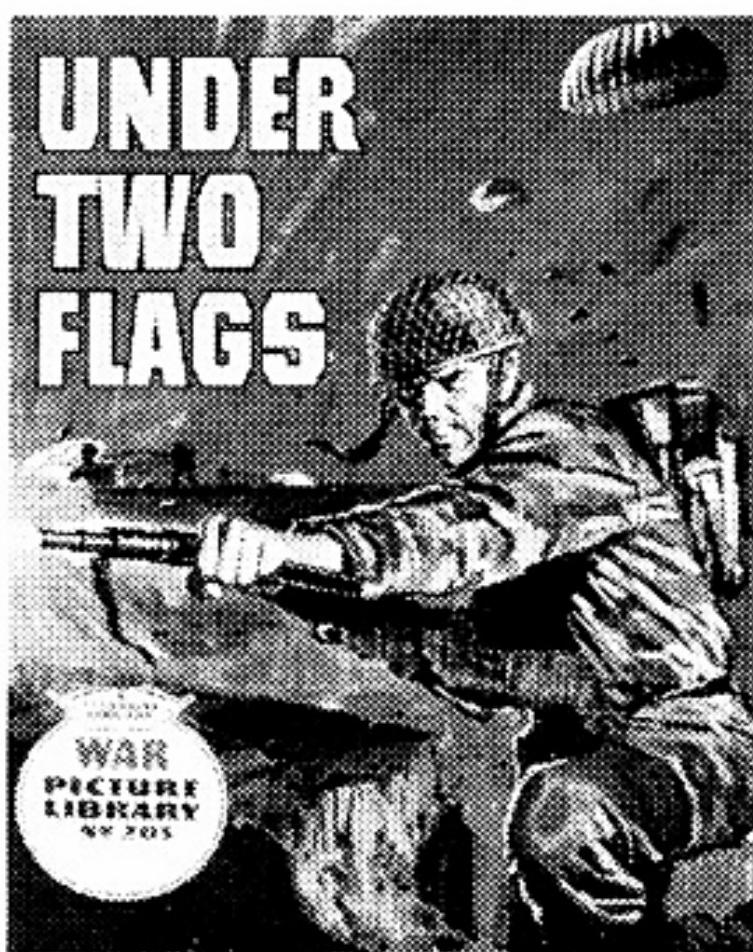
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